

6.0 ANALYSIS OF LONG- TERM EFFECTS

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the discussion of growth-inducing impacts, significant irreversible environmental changes, and areas of unavoidable significant environmental impacts. The following discussion addresses these issues as they relate to the development of the proposed project.

6.1 Growth Inducing Impacts

A project is regarded as growth-inducing if it can foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment (CEQA Guidelines §15126.2[d]). Included in this definition are projects that would remove obstacles to population growth, such as extending public services into areas not previously served. Growth inducement can also be defined as an action that would encourage an increase in density of development in surrounding areas or encourage adjacent development. Growth should not be assumed to be beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment (CEQA Guidelines §15126.2[d]).

The proposed project would increase the square footage of commercial highway uses in the area, it would also reduce commutes to more remote casino facilities, provide enhanced opportunities for utilizing the local work force by adding over 2,400 jobs, and enhance benefits to the City and to Imperial County by adding important sales and property tax-based revenues. The provision of over 2,400 jobs is not anticipated to result in population growth but rather would reduce the City's historically high employment rate (Parker and Collins, 2005). The high unemployment rate indicates that most of the people who would work at the proposed project site already live within the area.

The project will contribute funding to planned infrastructure improvements such as the water and wastewater treatment plant expansions identified in the City's 2006 Service Area Plan. Local roads will also be improved to meet project-related traffic demands. None of the required improvements would result in substantial excess capacity that may remove an obstacle to growth in the City of Calexico or nearby land in the County.

The development of the project site follows the logical pattern of the existing, approved, and/or proposed development extending northward from central Calexico. The proposed project site is located within a planned urbanizing area of the City and would not create an island of development. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not be growth inducing.

6.2 Significant Irreversible Environmental Changes

Section 15126 (c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR address any irreversible changes to the environment that may result from the implementation of the proposed project. Many of the facilities proposed for construction as part of this project could be dismantled and removed after their useful life, if

so desired. Building materials could be recycled, and the site prepared for other uses. However, several irreversible commitments of limited resources would result from implementation of the proposed project. Such resources include, but are not limited to, the following: lumber, sand, gravel, concrete, asphalt, petrochemical construction materials, steel, copper, lead and other metals, and water consumption. Much of the water used in project construction and operation, while theoretically reclaimable, would in fact be lost to this area through evaporation and disposal at the wastewater treatment plant.

In addition, reclamation and retention of agricultural soils at the site, while theoretically possible, would be difficult and expensive to reconstitute after use for nonagricultural purposes. Public infrastructure provided or expanded to serve the project site is considered likely to remain in place for the foreseeable future.

6.3 Unavoidable Significant Environmental Impacts

Analysis of environmental impacts caused by the proposed project has been performed, and is contained in Chapter 4.0 of this EIR. Unavoidable significant environmental impacts were identified for the following area and were analyzed as part of this EIR:

Transportation/Circulation. As discussed in Section 5.0 – Cumulative Impacts of this EIR, the proposed project will result in a significant and unmitigable impact to the SR-111 and SR-98 intersection during the Year 2035 conditions.

Air Quality.

As discussed in Section 4.4 – Air Quality of this EIR, during construction activities related to painting of the proposed buildings on the project site, the proposed project will result in ROG emissions in excess of the ICAPCD thresholds. The implementation of Mitigation Measures AQ1 and AQ2 will reduce this impact to the maximum extent feasible; however, significant and unmitigable impact is identified. In addition, in combination with the cumulative projects identified in Section 5.0 – Cumulative Impacts of this EIR, the proposed project will result in a cumulatively significant and unmitigable air quality impact related to ROG emissions during construction.

As discussed in Section 4.4 – Air Quality and Section 5.0 – Cumulative Impacts of this EIR, the proposed project will result in significant and unmitigable impact related to GHG Emissions. Mitigation Measure AQ6 includes measures that reduce trip generation or trip lengths, optimize transportation efficiency, and promote energy conservation. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure AQ6, the cumulative impact related to GHG emissions will be reduced to the maximum extent feasible; however, a cumulatively significant and unmitigable impact will remain with the implementation of the proposed project.